

November FIS Meeting in Washington DC

Interested FIS partners.

Last February Dr. Hogarth issued a tasking memorandum directing F/ST to work with region and science center offices that have responsibility for fisheries statistics programs that collect, process, and manage fishery dependent data necessary to support implementation of a national Fisheries Information System (FIS). In response to this, F/ST hosted a conference call in March 2003 with representatives from almost all of the region and center offices to discuss initiating pilot implementation projects that would support national database integration. It is time to review the accomplishments made since March and to consider follow-up and/or new projects that will produce measurable progress towards satisfying the goals of a national FIS. As discussed in March, an initial goal for an operational FIS would provide participation (who) and production (what or how much in pounds and \$\$) time series by specific vessels operating in US federal and State fisheries (where). This meeting is scheduled for the week of November 17, 2003 and will be held in Washington, DC.

The program has seen steady progress in several areas since March. A number of region and center offices submitted proposals and received funds to support FIS implementation projects. Work has started on several projects and S&T staff have traveled to a number of offices to discuss requirements and initial project plans. Collaborative work is underway.

In the northeast, NERO IT and permit office staff are working with S&T staff to identify and finalize NERO permit system requirements and FMP specific business rules. The goal is to evaluate modular components of the S&T application developed for SERO permits that might be modified and incorporated into the existing NERO systems and for the joint IT teams to develop a detailed application upgrade project plan. S&T staff have also either met with or discussed via conference call permit system requirements with the SWRO, and PIRO offices. Again the goal is to provide S&T assistance and support for modifying the SERO application so that it can upgrade existing permit applications for those Pacific offices. During these discussions, the need for national standards with respect to required identification variables for people (full names and birth dates – SSN if possible), corporations (employee identification numbers, DUNN numbers, and lists of shareholders with full names and birth dates), and vessels (coast guard id or state registration with manufacturers hull identification number) has been recognized. S&T staff also followed up on these requirements with a few meetings with SF and GC staff to discuss options for quick modification of necessary

regulatory language.

On the west coast, the PIFSC and SWFSC have developed their own metadata inventory systems and these are being reviewed by S&T IT staff as well as the S&T contract lawyer who Dr. Fox has hired to assist the agency in terms of compliance with the data quality act. S&T staff are working with the west coast region and science center offices (PIFSC-PIRO and SWFSC-SWRO) on permit projects, the evaluation of metadata systems, and on a project to test a new integrated database design with legacy Pacific HMS time series, to assist in defining application report requirements and QA/QC standards, and to assist in the final data conversion and migration to the new database system designed to support ongoing management and assessment of Pacific HMS..

Other actions have been taken to support FIS implementation. S&T staff have had initial discussions with offices that submitted proposals involved with creation of metadata applications. S&T staff are creating an FIS Forum ListServer to promote collaboration and inter-office discussions on FIS implementation. F/ST plans to use this website and the FIS Forum as the primary electronic forum to keep all participants informed on the progress of the FIS program. S&T staff are also working on definitions of minimum data elements that would need to be supported by local systems so that views could be produced to support integration of fishery participation and performance data across regions.

Despite the fact that progress has been made, a number of people have indicated interest in getting interested and involved staff together face-to-face to keep implementation activities moving forward. In a number of cases travel funds were requested as components of the FIS proposals. This was our initial goal last March, but security and other concerns made that meeting impossible. S&T is therefore planning to hold a meeting during the week of November 17. To be successful, FIS needs input and active participation from all region and center offices that have responsibility for management of core fishery dependent databases consistent with Dr. Hogarth's charge. The goal of the meeting is to enable staff from a variety of offices to share information on system capabilities and limitations and to start the process of identifying how staff can best work together to make an integrated FIS system a reality. The meeting will provide an opportunity for S&T and region and center staff to develop a detailed and more formal project plans for the national FIS. For those offices that did not receive travel funds as part of their projects, S&T will attempt to cover travel to this meeting. This will be an opportunity for region and center staff to let us know what your needs are, and what FIS resources may be required to support necessary modifications to your local systems.

We will send out the meeting agenda in mid October. Please let us know how many people are interested and can likely attend so that we can start logistics planning. Also please identify what items need to be discussed at the meeting so we can add them to the agenda. Please block out the week of November 17, and we look forward to a successful and well-attended meeting.

Thank you,

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